

Copy.

U. S. Branch Mint, New Orleans.  
Treasurer's Office, Dec. 6. 1857

Sir.

I have read the communication addressed to you by the Secretary of the Treasury, and the accompanying extract of a letter from some house in this city to the Dept. in which complaint is made of the heavy losses on California dust, deposited at this mint, and beg to state what has come under my observation in regard to this matter.

In consequence of several complaints made last winter, of the loss in weight of dust after melting, I was led to investigate the matter thoroughly, and satisfy myself of the correctness of the process of melting; I caused each deposit to be melted by itself in a new Crucible, and the result corroborated the usual loss, which varies from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 per cent. and in some instances, when the dust was very dirty, the loss was as much as 7 and 8 per cent. - The dust being intermixed with sand, quartz and other matter, almost imperceptible to the naked eye, it is impossible to judge from its appearance what the loss



will be in melting. - From the experiments thus made, I am well convinced that the heavy loss in melting is attributable to the quantity of sand and other matter contained in the dust.

Another source of loss in the value of the dust arises from the marked difference in its quality or fineness, which, from the records of the Assayer's reports in this office, is about 100. millièmes. - These facts are not taken into consideration by the Brokers or purchasers of gold dust, who are in the habit of paying uniform prices for it, without regard to its quality or its condition, as to the sand and other matter contained therein, hence they are sometimes disappointed with the result of the melting and assay at the mint. -

It is proper to state, that to my knowledge, no complaints have ever been made by the Californians who deposit their dust in the mint, they always appear to be well satisfied with the result.

You are well aware of the process in melting deposits at this mint, and as the Melt & Refiner in his report to you, has fully explained the subject,



it is unnecessary to offer any further remarks in relation thereto.

In conclusion, I would remark that, as far as I can ascertain the average yield of Californian dust at this mint, compares favorably with that of the mother mint at Philadelphia.

Very respectfully  
Your obt. Serv.  
, Signed,

William DeSoto.  
Treasurer

Wm. Neafin Esq.  
Supt. Branch Mint  
New Orleans.